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Latvia University of Agriculture
Faculty of Economics and Social Development



GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND DEFENDING MASTER'S THESIS

A methodological material for master students of the academic master study programme
implemented by the LLU Faculty of Economics and Social Development

Sociology of Organisations and Public Administration

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities
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1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Guidelines is to introduce students of the academic master study programme “Sociology of Organisations and Public Administration” (hereinafter SOPA) implemented by the Faculty of Economics and Social Development (ESAF), Latvia University of Agriculture (LLU), with the requirements of writing and formatting master’s thesis and its presentation for pre-defence and final defence. The Guidelines were elaborated in accordance with the LLU Regulation of Studies (LLU Senate Decision of 10 June 2015 No. 8-182) and the LLU Regulation regarding Final Examinations (LLU Senate Decision of 9 April 2014 No. 8-65).

The **master’s thesis** is a research carried out by a student, which confirms the theoretical knowledge acquired, methodological and organisational skills built up by the student in the field of social sciences to the extent prescribed by the study programme. The thesis comprises novelty or elements of practical application. The thesis shall employ appropriate sociological research methods and include an overview of the methods, an analysis of collected and processed data, conclusions and proposals.

The learning outcomes of the master’s thesis are as follows:

knowledge – an in-depth, structured and analytic knowledge in the field of organisations and public administration as well as knowledge about how to practically carry out a sociological research for the purpose of examining social structure and processes;

skills – to summarise, systemise and critically review bibliographical sources; to choose and employ appropriate sociological theories and research methods; skills of analysis and synthesis as well as problem solution skills; an ability to draw justified conclusions and proposals how to solve problems; skills to approbate the research findings;

competences – a set of academic, systemic, analytic and instrumental competences that results in the ability to make a creative and innovative contribution to the analysis of complicated social processes and phenomena in the field of organisations and public administration, to integrate the knowledge of various social sciences, to present the research results in a reasoned and convincing way and to stress their implications for sustainable social development.

The originality of the master’s thesis shall be confirmed by the author’s **Guarantee** (an example is given in Annex 4).

The best master’s thesis shall be submitted to appropriate research work contests and recommended for publication or practical application to stakeholders by the Master Examination Commission (hereinafter MEC).

A copy of the master’s thesis (in printed and electronic formats) – after its presentation for defence, together with the reviews – shall be stored at the Economic Information Room at ESAF, LLU. The obligatory storage period shall be 10 years. The appeal procedure shall be stipulated by the LLU Regulation of Studies.

2. WRITING AND SUPERVISING A MASTER'S THESIS

2.1. Choosing a topic for the master's thesis

The student shall choose a topic for his/her master's thesis based on his/her scientific and professional interests, the level of theoretical preparedness and the availability of information needed for the thesis. The topic shall be accepted by the scientific supervisor who shall be appointed by the director of the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (hereinafter ISSH). The topic shall comply with the scope of the study programme, focusing on the following research directions: organisational and public administration or topical social processes in Latvia's regions and rural areas. In the master's thesis a student is advised to continue researching the range of problems that was examined in his/her previous research, for example, the bachelor's thesis, reports, study projects etc., thereby expanding or deepening the examination of the problems.

In case the topic chosen by the student is not topical or if complications could arise during the process of elaboration the master's thesis, the director of the Institute may reject the chosen topic and the student shall choose another topic in coordination with the supervisor.

2.2. Accepting the topic of the master's thesis

The terms of reference of the master's thesis shall be **computer typeset, produced in four copies using a form** that is available at the LLU Faculty of Economics and Social Development and submitted for approval to the ISSH after being accepted by the master student's supervisor. The terms of reference of the master's thesis for full- and part-time students shall be approved in the 1st semester.

After being approved, the student shall submit one copy of the terms of reference of the master's thesis to the dean's office, the second one to the ISSH, the third one to the supervisor and the fourth one shall be kept by the student him/herself.

The supervisor for the student and the topic chosen by the student shall be approved by the dean's decree within the term set by the dean's office of the Faculty. Any **change or correction of the topic** of the master's thesis may be done only until the pre-defence of the master's thesis after being accepted by the supervisor.

2.3. Functions of the supervisor of the master student

A master student shall be supervised only by a teaching staff member holding a doctor's degree or, exceptionally, with a master's degree in the respective science. The duties of the supervisor involve advising the student on research-related matters:

- drawing up a work plan;
- making the structure and theoretical part of the master's thesis;
- selecting bibliographical sources and other sources of information;
- choosing research methods.

The duty of the supervisor shall be to review individual parts of the master's thesis and the whole paper and indicate what changes have to be made or what additional contribution is necessary; yet, the supervisor shall not directly influence the content, form and defence of the research to the extent that objectively hinders the MEC from evaluating the student's knowledge, skills and his/her contribution to the research. If the student, together with the supervisor, believes that an *adviser* has to be involved for the purpose of the research, it may be done. The advisor is documented and puts his/her signature on the title page of the master's thesis.

The supervisor shall not accept a master's thesis for defence if it represents a compilation of the works of other authors and copied texts from previously published works (even if there are references to the works) or if the paper contains indications of plagiarism. If the supervisor believes that the student's research, in terms of its content and form, complies with the methodological requirements set by the Faculty, he/she signs the master's thesis and it shall be submitted to the related institute and accepted for defence.

2.4. General structure and composition of the master's thesis

The structure of a master's thesis shall be as follows:

- title page;
- annotation in the Latvian language;
- two annotations in foreign languages (English, German or Russian);
- contents;
- list of tables with their numbers, titles and page references (an example is given in Annex 7);
- list of figures with their numbers, titles and page references (graphs, schemes, drawings, photographs) (an example is given in Annex 8);
- explanations of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols arranged in alphabetical order;
- introduction;
- main part of the master's thesis divided into chapters and subchapters;
- conclusions;
- proposals (if necessary and are logically derived from the specifics of the master's thesis);
- list of references in alphabetical order;
- author's guarantee (an example is given in Annex 4);
- annexes;
- decision of the MEC (an example is given in Annex 5).

The **main part** of the master's thesis shall be computer typeset and **80-100 pages in length (excluding** the annotations, contents, lists of tables and figures, explanations of abbreviations and acronyms, list of references and annexes). A recommended structure of the master's thesis shall be as follows (as a percentage of the total size of it):

- introduction 3-5%;
- main part 90-94%;
- conclusions and proposals 3-5%.

2.4.1. Title

The title page is the first page of the master's thesis. It indicates the name of the university, the name and surname of the author, the topic, the name and surname, scientific or academic degree and academic position of the supervisor and of the director of the related institute as well as the place and time of elaboration of the master's thesis (Annex 1).

In Latvia, Latin abbreviations of scientific and academic degrees are used, which are supplemented with an abbreviation of the particular science. The doctor's and master's degrees are abbreviated as *Dr* or *Mg*, for example, *Dr.sc.soc*, *Dr.oec.*, *Dr.paed.*, *Dr.phil*, *Dr.hist.*, *Mg.sc.soc.*, *Mg.paed.* The abbreviations shall be in italics.

The academic title of the supervisor shall be abbreviated as follows:

- professor – prof.;
- associated professor – assoc.prof.;
- assistant professor – assist.prof.;
- lecturer – lect.;
- assistant – assist.

2.4.2. Annotations

An annotation is a brief summary that presents the research aim and tasks, research questions and/or a hypothesis, research methods and describes the key chapter and the findings and conclusions of the master's thesis in the form of an overview. The annotation should be considered as a visit card of the master's thesis; therefore, it is important to focus both on its content and on its style. It is important for the annotation to be accurately and correctly translated into foreign languages. The length of the annotation **shall not exceed two pages**.

The annotation shall specify:

- author's name, surname and the title of the master's thesis;
- total number of pages, tables, figures and bibliographical sources, including in foreign languages, and of annexes;
- research aim and tasks;
- research questions and/or a hypothesis;
- research methods employed;
- structure of the master's thesis and give brief insight into the contents of the chapters;
- author's contribution to examining the research problem and solving it (novelty);
- main findings and conclusions.

The annotation shall be written in a way, so that it may be used separately from the master's thesis. In the annotation, it is advised to begin sentences with such words as *the author of the master's thesis developed, examined, identified, found, concluded* etc.

The master's thesis **requires three annotations**: in Latvian, English and one more language (German or Russian). The supervisor and the reviewers *shall evaluate the consistency of the annotation with the contents and title of the master's thesis as an important element in the overall evaluation*.

The annotations' pages **shall not be numbered but shall be included** in the total number of the pages.

2.4.3. Contents

The contents of the master's thesis shall indicate all the components of it up to the annexes (Annex 2). The titles of chapters and subchapters in the contents and in the text shall be identical.

The title page and the contents page **shall not be numbered but shall be included** in the total number of the pages. The numbering of the master's thesis pages shall be started with the next page after the Contents. The section break icon shall be used to do it.

It is recommended to make a table of contents by employing a tool for making such a table automatically.

Making a table of contents automatically

Step 1. Define a style for Heading 1 in accordance with the Guidelines or required

standards (e.g. the font, the size of the font). *Home* > *Styles* [right click the mouse on the icon Heading 1] > *Modify*.

Step 2. The same operation is repeated for subheadings (Heading 2, Heading 3 etc.). If the subheadings are not required, this operation is omitted.

Step 3. In a new document, when beginning any next chapter, the headings are defined according to their level – Heading 1 etc. It is done by placing the cursor on the heading or a better way is if highlighting the heading text and clicking the icons *Home* > *Styles* > [Heading 1 or Heading 2 etc.].

In an existing document, the operations are the same for viewing the entire text and finding the headings as well as defining the necessary formatting style.

Step 4. Place the cursor on the page for the table of contents and go to References > Table of Contents.

It allows choosing a blank table of contents (by clicking the cursor on Automatic Table 1 or Automatic Table 2).

Step 5. In order to update the headings and page numbers in the table of contents, place the cursor there and press keyboard button F9. Two options will appear: *Update page numbers only* or *Update entire table*. Performing this operation (the updating of the table of contents) is recommended before sending the master's thesis to another person or before printing it or after it has been completed.

!!! If the newly created table of contents also includes some text that does not have to appear in the Contents, Clear formatting or the Normal style has to be applied to the text in the body text defined as Heading 1, 2 or 3 (not in the table of contents), and the text has to be reformatted in accordance with the Guidelines. After performing the operation, the table of contents shall be updated (Step 5).

2.4.4. Introduction

The Introduction shall make a potential reader interested in, giving insight into the content and findings of the master's thesis. The Introduction shall briefly review what other authors have examined in the field of the chosen topic describing related problems and topical issues as well as the scope of their examinations. It shall also specify the period and scope of the master student's own research.

The Introduction shall specify:

- problem situation and topicality of the research topic;
- research problem and its scientific significance;
- research limitations (if necessary);
- brief insight into how extensively the problem has been researched (in Latvia and in the world);
- research novelty (the author's contribution to researching the problem within the scope of the master's thesis);
- elements of the master's thesis programmatic part:
 - research aim;
 - research tasks to achieve the aim;
 - research object and subject;
 - hypothesis put forward (if possible) and/or research questions;
- research approach, methods of data acquisition and analysis;
- theoretical and practical significance of the master's thesis;
- theoretical basis of the master's thesis (a short description of the bibliographical sources used);
- presentation of the findings in scientific and/or practical conferences.

The definition of a research problem and topicality of the problem is the starting position of any research study. It shall be based on the latest empirical and theoretical findings. The research problem is a situation that is identified as a complex theoretical and practical issue or task to be examined. In sociology, a problem is a contradiction in a situation that has to be examined and solved employing an appropriate theory.

The identification of a research problem is associated with the choice of a research object and subject. The research object and subject are those really involving the research problem or the contradiction, a solution to which has to be identified during the research process. The research object is part of the reality within the scope of which the research subject is present. In sociology and other social sciences and humanities, the research object is defined as any particular object to be examined; it may be a process or a phenomenon that create a problem situation and may be chosen for a research, as well as an individual, a group of individuals or an organisation. The research subject is an aspect of the object chosen for the analysis and for the creation of a theoretical conception. It represents a narrow scope of individual elements and their interrelations, which lies within the boundaries of the research object: a distinctive feature or features. If it is not possible to examine all the aspects related to the problem sufficiently deeply and broadly, then limitations shall be set for the research when defining the research object and subject.

Based on the topicality of the research problem, a research aim shall be defined for the master's thesis – an ideal and mentally expected research result (what is expected to be achieved by the research? what will be examined, discovered, developed?). There is a single research aim for the master's thesis, which shall be defined as short and concrete as possible.

The research tasks reveal the way the aim is going to be achieved. The tasks are particular methodological activities that are subordinated to the aim and reflect the course of achieving the aim. The tasks reflect the content of the master's thesis (often, a chapter of the master's thesis is dedicated to the particular task).

Research methods are instruments, by means of which the research tasks are performed in the master's thesis. The research approach (quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods) applied and the methods of information acquisition and data analysis shall be specified in the master's thesis. The quantitative approach tests a hypothesis, while the qualitative approach creates the hypothesis.

A hypothesis is a provable assumption about the existence of some association or causal relationship in scientific theory (it reveals the probability regarding the causes and associations of the phenomenon researched). If the particular research idea has not been proved in theory or in previous research investigations, a research question shall be raised instead of the hypothesis.

Fundamental scientific research studies as well as research papers in international indexed publications, original works by theoreticians in sociology, monographs, encyclopaedias of the relevant science and explanatory dictionaries and the scientific literature serve as information sources for the master's thesis. Laws of the Republic of Latvia and other states, decisions of the government, policy documents, statistical data, periodicals, unpublished materials of enterprises and organisations, researcher handbooks, press materials, previously conducted and published research studies, unpublished research studies and reports, Internet materials and other sources also may be used in the research. The author's previous research studies (e.g. the bachelor's thesis, surveys) may also serve as the information sources.

2.4.5. Main part of the master's thesis

The main part of the master's thesis deals with a **theoretical and analytical or empirical** solution to the problem defined in the introduction. It comprises a theoretical part and an empirical part, which are subdivided into chapters. It is useful to divide large chapters into subchapters. The number of chapters and subchapters is not restricted – it depends on the length and content of the master's thesis (usually there are 3-5 chapters). A chapter shall not have only one subchapter. To avoid the fragmentation of the master's thesis, a subchapter shall not be shorter than two pages.

First chapters usually comprise a **theoretical discussion**, in which the author summarises facts and compares theories developed by various scientists; on this basis, an analysis of the problem is performed giving comprehensive insight into the theoretical and practical examination of the problem and reflecting the findings of the latest published research investigations and discussions. The theoretical chapters give explanations of the concepts pertaining to the topic and set out the theoretical framework and findings regarding the researched problem according to the conception of the master's thesis.

It is advised to refer also to an international experience in tackling the problem chosen by the author, stressing the positive aspects or drawbacks. In elaborating the theoretical part, a great role is played by a critical examination of the literature and information sources and, if the author's ideas considerably differ from the findings available in the literature, a convincing justification of the author's idea shall be provided – which particular scientist's (discussion participant's) conclusions the author disagrees with and why. The theoretical chapters shall not represent a summary of findings only of other authors; the opinion and judgements of the author him/herself shall be given as well. The theoretical chapters shall not be written in the form of annotation or reproduction about the materials read. All the chapters have to be logically interrelated and end with logical transitions to the next chapter/subchapter. At the beginning of a chapter, a few paragraphs of general binding information may be added, which explain the issues dealt with in the chapter and bind the particular chapter to the rest of the text.

In the analytical or empirical part of the master's thesis, the author shall present the skill to independently perform an examination and an analysis of empirical data. The theoretical chapters of the master's thesis create a conceptual framework for empirical research; therefore, the theoretical and empirical parts shall be closely and logically interrelated, as the theoretical findings are tested empirically. The empirical part of the master's thesis shall present a research methodology, an analysis of acquired data and research results. The **research methodology** involves:

- justification of the research approach applied, methods of data acquisition and analysis;
- justification and description of research instruments employed to acquire the data (e.g., a survey questionnaire, guidelines for interviews, observation records, code matrixes of content analysis etc.);
- justification of how theoretical findings will be verified empirically (how the research aim is going to be achieved, the hypothesis proved or answers given to the research questions);
- justification and description of a survey sample calculated according to the data acquisition method/methods chosen (number of respondents, experts, secondary data sets, chosen texts for discourse analysis etc.);
- description of field work (where, when and how the data were acquired, how the process of data acquisition took place);

- outline of how the acquired data are going to be analysed (the structure of an analysis, methods used).

The **data analysis** shall be based on the information approbated in the theoretical part thus confirming the skill of the author of the master's thesis to perform a research by using the knowledge, informative materials and data acquired. Qualitative and quantitative data processing and analysis methods and software shall be employed in the processing of empirical data, for example, statistical analysis, standard programs (e.g. SPSS, NVivo etc.), discourse analysis and other scientific methods. The data processing and analysis methods shall be selected in line with the chosen research approach. A special focus shall be placed on the analysis and interpretation of acquired data. If necessary, the acquired data are presented in tables and figures, and an analytic assessment of the information presented and the trends and relationships identified is obligatory.

Within the analysis of empirical data, the author of the master's thesis shall reveal a connection between the empirical data and theoretical findings. Answers shall be certainly given to the research questions, indicating what proves (or disproves) the hypothesis put forward in the introduction. If it is logically derived from the research conducted, it is advised to make a discussion on and proposals for further research on the problem examined in the master's thesis, reflecting the author's own contribution to the examination of the particular topic.

2.4.6. Conclusions and proposals

Conclusions and proposals are the final part of the master's thesis, which plays the most important role in the defence of the master's thesis. Conclusions and proposals have to be written in the *form of theses* and *numbered with Arabic numerals*. Proposals might be an important result of the research done in the master's thesis; yet, not in any case the elaboration of the proposals is logical and necessary in sociological research, as the student may choose a topic for the master's thesis that does not focus on a practical solution to the research problem. The need for proposals is determined by the research aim and tasks. In conclusions, the author shall demonstrate that the aim has been achieved, the tasks have been performed as well as whether and how the hypothesis has been proved and give answers to the research questions. In conclusions, the author may reflect his/her ideas about further research. **Conclusions** shall:

- be directly associated with the research aim and tasks;
- reflect the most important findings derived from the content of the master's thesis;
- be supported with the most important data and facts presented in the master's thesis.

It is advised to draw up 1-2 conclusions from each chapter of the master's thesis, and more conclusions shall be derived from the empirical part. They shall not contradict each other. **Proposals** shall be:

- based on the data analyses, surveys and conclusions made in the master's thesis;
- justified, concrete, addressed to a certain entity and feasible in practice.

Proposals shall stress the recommendations justified in the master's thesis and aimed at solving the problem, avoiding drawbacks or using positive experience. Proposals shall not be defined in an imprecise and general way, for example, "*to make amendments to the legislation*", "*to create a favourable environment for an organisation*"; the author shall specify – who has to do what, when and why.

2.4.7. List of references

A list of references represents all the bibliographical sources – books, research papers, texts and other informant sources – **referred to** in the master’s thesis and used during the work on it, giving bibliographical details in the language in which the information is available (the original language).

!!! It is compulsory for the master’s thesis to use fundamental research findings, monographs, original works as well as research articles in international indexed publications. The master’s thesis shall not refer to Wikipedia and unpublished lecture materials, as well as the use of textbooks is not appropriate for the level of master’s thesis. The minimum number of bibliographical sources used shall be 50.

2.4.8. Annexes

Annexes represent documents and data if they are too detailed and large in size for being placed in the main text. They shall be separated by a page, in the centre of which the heading ANNEXES is placed (it shall be formatted as Heading 1 and not numbered); the page shall be included in the total number of pages and shown in the Contents. Annexes **shall not be included** in the total length of the master’s thesis, their pages shall not be numbered; yet, the page of any new annex shall indicate a number in the top right corner (e.g. *Annex 1*). If an annex is several pages in length, every next page shall indicate “continued”, e.g. *Annex 1 continued*.

Annexes shall have:

- example(s) of the instrument(s) for acquiring primary data;
- example of a filled-in questionnaire for each sample group in a survey *;
- examples of interview transcripts* (all expert interviews + at least three interviews from the surveyed group(s);
- observation maps*, the content analysis matrix(es)*;
- worksheet tables that were used for calculations but not included in the text;
- filled-in forms of documents, instructions, statutes etc. may also be included.

* Other transcripts and/or filled-in questionnaires shall be included in a separate folder that is brought by the student for the purpose of defending the master’s thesis. The MEC and the reviewer have the right to require presenting the materials related to data primary processing.

3. FORMATTING THE MASTER'S THESIS

3.1. General requirements

The text shall be written in the English language, taking into consideration the following requirements:

- formulation of the text shall be accurate, clear, logical and concrete;
- new idea shall be started in a new paragraph;
- new chapter shall be started on a new page, while a new subchapter – on the same page;
- every chapter shall be numbered (with Arabic numerals) and have a heading;
- subchapters shall be numbered and have a headings.

The student is the author of the thesis. The pronoun “I” and any verb with the first person pronoun shall not be used – information may be given in the passive voice, indicating no particular performer of an action, for example, “*according to the research results, one can conclude that...*” However, it is even less appropriate to replace the pronoun “I” with the pronoun “we” because the research done by the author shall be **original and performed independently by him/herself**. It is advised to use the phrases: “*the author believes...*”, “*in the opinion of the author*”. The passive voice may be employed, for example, “*it was examined, revealed in the chapter*”.

3.2. Formatting the text

The master's thesis shall be written and formatted in a visually pleasant way and comply with the requirements set in the Guidelines:

- text shall be formatted in A4 page size (210 mm×297 mm);
- text shall be justified on both sides; the left margin shall be set at 35 mm and the top, bottom and right margins at 25 mm;
- **body text** shall be formatted in 12 pt font, chapter **headings** in 14 pt bold, all caps, **subchapter headings** in 12 pt bold. Spacing before and after a subchapter heading shall be 12 pt and 6 pt, respectively;
- every **chapter** shall be started on a new page, spacing after the heading shall be 18 pt if it is followed by the chapter's text or 12 pt if it is followed by a subchapter heading. If the chapter is divided into subchapters, the chapter's heading is followed by the first subchapter's heading;
- **subchapters** shall not be started on a new page; yet, the heading and at least two lines of the first paragraph of the subchapter's text shall be available on one page (the heading shall not appear at the bottom of a page if the chapter's text begins on the next page as well as a long heading shall not appear on two pages);
- **headings** shall be centred and not indented. They shall be **automatically numbered with Arabic numerals** (except the following headings: Contents, Introduction, Conclusions, Proposals and the List of References). **No full stop** is put at the end of a heading. The number of a subchapter includes the number of the main chapter and a serial number within the chapter, e.g. *1.1., 1.2., 2.1., 2.2.* etc.;
- font – Times New Roman;
- spacing between lines shall be set at 1.5;
- indent for a new paragraph shall be set at 10 mm;
- pages shall be counted beginning with the title page, and the Contents pages shall be also included in the total number of the pages (they are not numbered). The pages are numbered beginning with the next page after the table of contents. The page numbers shall be placed at the bottom of the page and aligned right using Arabic

- numerals sized 12 pt (Annex 3);
- decimal separator shall be a **full stop, rather than a comma**;
- non-breaking space shall be placed between a number and its measurement unit (*ctrl+shift+space*), e.g. 5 h, 3 pcs., except for the % mark, as no space shall be placed between a number and it, e.g. 3%;
- the same bullet style shall be used in the entire text. After the bullet, the text may start with a capital or small letter;
- if numbering items by means of a number and a full stop (in this case no colon is used and the text starts with a capital letter, placing a full stop at the end) or a number/letter with a parenthesis (in this case a punctuation mark (except a full stop) may or may not be placed before a numbered item; the text starts with a small letter and a coma or colon is placed between the numbered items).

3.3. Formatting tables

To easier perceive analytical information, it is advised to supplement the master's thesis with tables and figures; yet, the same information shall not be presented twice in the master's thesis, i.e. the author shall decide on how to illustratively present the data and information – in tables or figures.

Every table shall be numbered within the chapter. The table shall be numbered with **two numbers** using Arabic numerals: the first number indicates the **number of the chapter**, while the second one – the **number of the table within the chapter**. The table number shall be placed above the table, intended right, e.g. Table 3.1. Every table shall be given a title being appropriate for its content. The table title shall be centred horizontally, sized 12 pt and bolded; it is placed in a new line and **no full stop** is placed at the end. The text in the table header shall be centred and bolded. The table shall fit to the width of the text (*Auto Fit Window*).

The table title shall answer the following questions: **What? Where? When?** and **In what units of measurement?** (see examples below). Measurement units shall not be indicated if they are illogical (e.g. Table 3.1). If data in the table have various and different measurement units, no measurement units shall be indicated in the table title; the measurement units shall be indicated in the row next to the indicator name. In the table title, a measurement unit shall be separated by a comma.

!!! Any table shall have at least three rows and, if quantitative indicators are indicated, at least three columns.

Examples of formatting tables

Table 3.1

Definition of life quality by various sciences

Science	Fragments of the most important definitions	Source
Philosophy	necessity to distinguish the factors that maintain life and strengthen or weaken the ability to enjoy the life from those making us wish to stay alive	Garratt, 1994
Social sciences	as average weighted , if comparing various indicators	Kuhneman, 1999
	income level is usually associated with satisfaction and happiness in particular countries and a particular period, a higher national income level does not contribute to a higher overall satisfaction level at national level	Lends, 2002
	to some extent an amorphous, multilayer and complex conception with many and various components – objective and subjective , macro -social factors and micro -individual factors	Walker, 1995

Table 3.1 continued

Science	Fragments of the most important definitions	Source
Gerontology	life quality for old individuals depends on reserves – resources and knowledge , which have been accumulated throughout their life, e.g., personal social support, social capital, social skills, material resources etc.	Grundy, 2004
Medicine	set of mutual interactions among objective and subjective dimensions, i.e. a multidimensional assessment of an individual's personal and environmental systems, given both personal and socio-economic criteria	Lawton, 1991
	product of interaction of social, health, economic and environmental conditions, which influences human and social development	Canadian Social Development Council
Psychology	definition of subjective wellbeing involves three components: pleasant affect, unpleasant affect, satisfaction, where 1) high pleasant affect + low unpleasant affect = happy ; 2) low pleasant affect + high unpleasant affect = unhappy .	Diener, Lucas, 1999

Source: author's construction (Smith, 2000; Phillips, 2006^c; Brown, 2004; Walker, 2005; Bosch, 2005; Kuhneman, Schwarz, 1999; Borgatta, 2002).

Table 3.2

Financial burden of repayment (purchases on credit and loans) and of total home expense for pensioners in the regions of Latvia in 2007, % (n=1971)

Indicators	Territory	Ratings by pensioners		
		<i>very difficult to pay</i>	<i>slightly difficult to pay</i>	<i>not difficult to pay</i>
Financial burden of total home expense	Riga	35.5	50.2	14.3
	Pieriga	36.1	56.8	7.1
	Vidzeme	37.4	52.5	10.0
	Kurzeme	30.8	53.5	15.8
	Zemgale	43.5	39.2	17.3
	Latgale	46.8	42.2	11.0
Financial burden of purchases on credit and loans	Riga	7.4	57.4	35.3
	Pieriga	10.5	78.9	10.5
	Vidzeme	47.8	43.5	8.7
	Kurzeme	11.1	60.0	28.9
	Zemgale	43.4	43.4	13.2
	Latgale	23.7	55.3	21.1

Source: author's survey based on the CSB EU-CILC anonymised database

In the master's thesis, a table shall be placed as close to the first reference to it as possible. An explanation of and conclusions drawn from the table's content shall be always provided in the text. Giving an interpretation of the data in table shall be an **obligatory** task of the author of the master's thesis.

The source of information shall be indicated for every table. The reference to the source shall be formatted as a citation. The way how to format a citation is provided in Subchapter 3.6 headlined *Citing references within the text*.

Statistical practices have created general rules for making an accurate statistical table. The most important ones are as follows:

- a table shall not be too large and complicated. Instead of creating one large table, it is advised to create two or several small ones. If the table exceeds half a page, it shall be used as an annex;
- it is recommended to make a table longer rather than wider;
- if a table has to be split and a part of it has to be placed on the next page, the table number shall be indicated above the table in the top right corner of the page together with the words “Table continued” in bold; the table header shall be repeated (see Table 3.1). The continuation of the table shall not be less than two rows. If the table header is large, the header columns shall be numbered and the numbers shall be used in the continuation;
- each cell shall be filled in the table. If a phenomenon has not observed, a hyphen (-) shall be written in the cell. If the phenomenon has been observed but no data are available, three dots (...) shall be put. If some cell may not be filled in owing to logical reasons, a cross mark is put (X);
- character sizes in a table shall be in the range of 10-12 pt;
- source of information shall be indicated under the table, formatted in italic, and a full stop shall be put at the end. The characters shall be sized 11 pt; spacing 0 pt before and 6 pt after.

3.4. Formatting figures

Illustrations – schemes, diagrams, drawings, maps etc. are called **figures**. A figure shall be placed in the master’s thesis as close to a reference to it in the text as possible. The figure shall be placed in a way so that it is easy to see it and read it’s text in the direction of reading or if the master’s thesis is rotated 90° clockwise.

Figures shall be numbered with Arabic numerals within the chapter, for example, Fig. 3.1, Fig. 3.2.

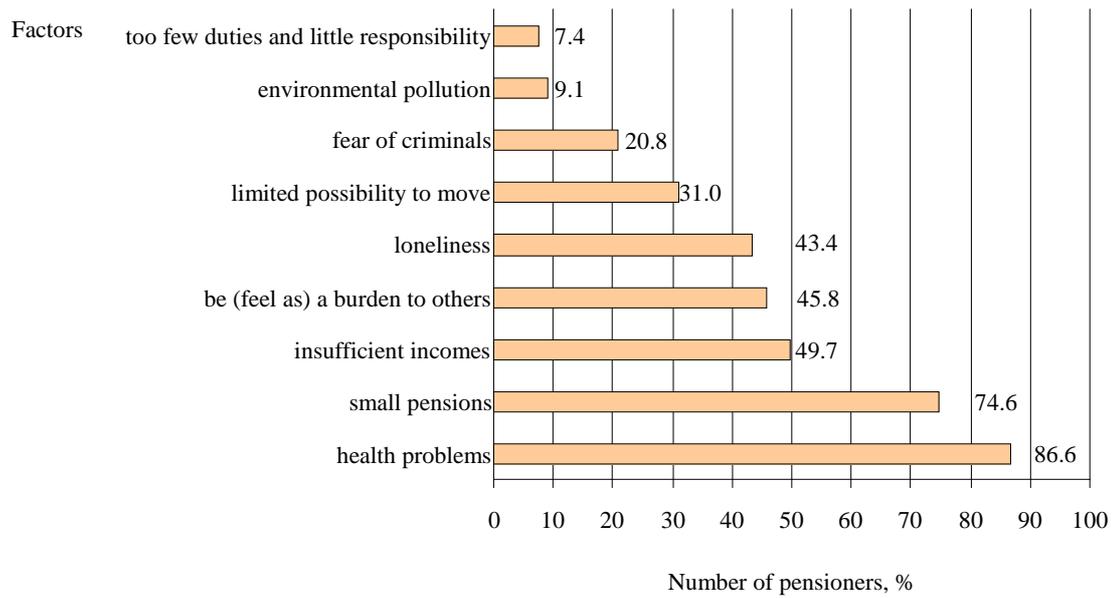
Every figure is given a title, which is placed under the figure and centred, in the same line with the figure number; characters shall be sized 12 pt, bolded; spacing 6 pt after. The figure title shall answer the following questions: **What? Where? When?** and **In what units of measurement?** (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3). Measurement units shall not be indicated if data in the figure have two different measurement units or if they are illogical (see Figures 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6). **No full stop** is put at the end of the figure title. In the figure title, the measurement units shall be separated by a comma.

No **fill, shadows and borders** shall be used in figures. Gridlines shall be of size ¼ or 0.25 pt and the numeral/character size shall be set at 10-12 pt. Texts on figures shall be avoided; instead, numerals and symbols shall be used, which are explained under the figure. The explanatory text for abbreviations and symbols shall be sized 10 pt. The figure shall be centred. Spacing between a figure and the following text shall be set at 6 pt.

!!! The x and y axes shall be defined.

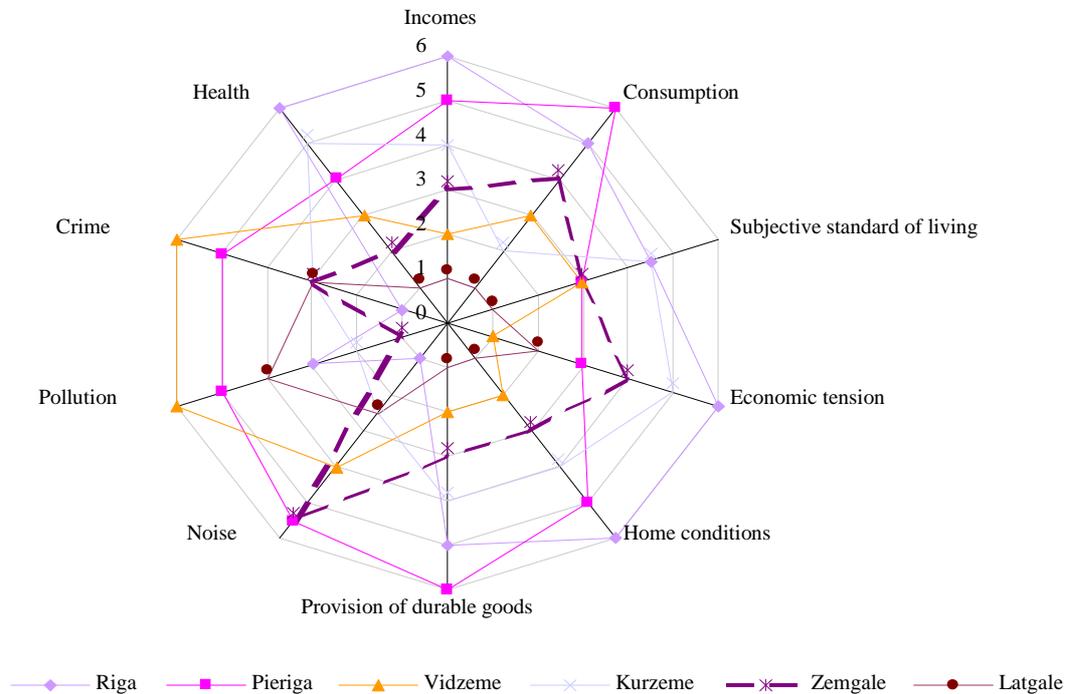
The source of information shall be indicated for every figure. The reference to the source shall be formatted as a citation and placed under the figure. The reference shall be formatted in italic, with a full stop at the end. The characters shall be sized 11 pt; spacing 0 pt before and 6 pt after.

Examples of formatting figures



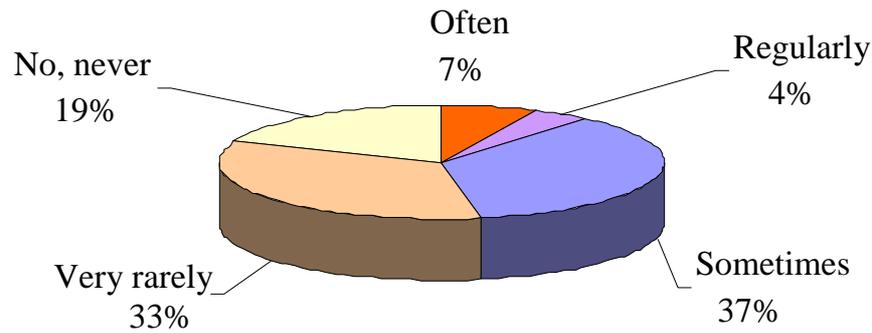
Source: author's construction based on a 2009 survey in Zemgale

Fig. 3.1. Ratings of the most important factors in population aging by Zemgale region pensioners in 2009 (n=461)



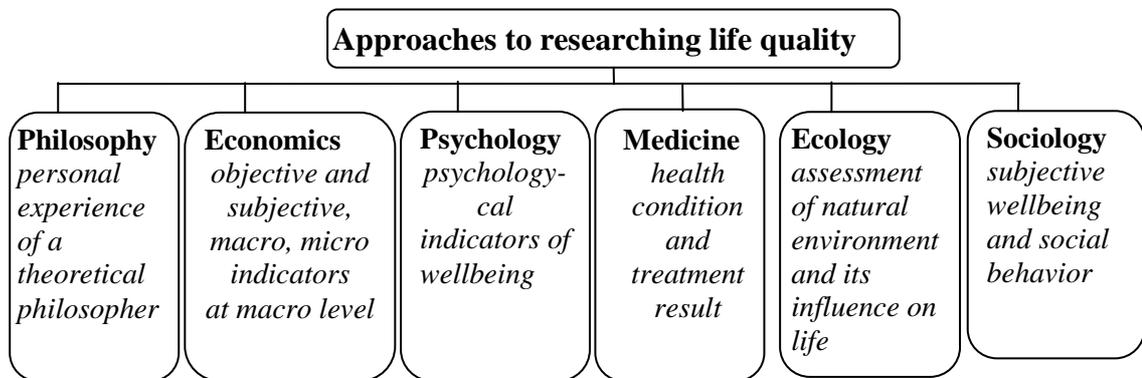
Source: author's construction based on the CSB MBA and EU-CILC anonymised database

Fig. 3.2. Comparison of the life quality of pensioners in Latvia's regions in 2007 and 2008 (with 6 being the highest rating and 1 the lowest one)



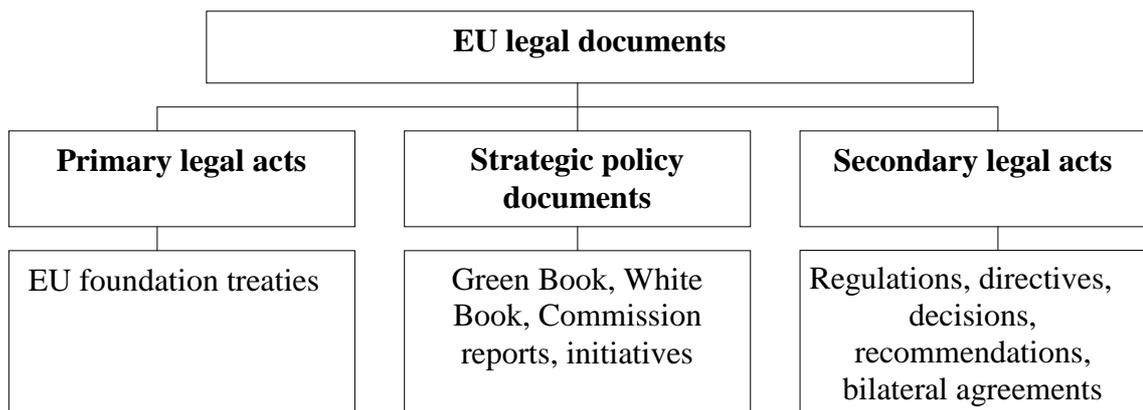
Source: author's construction based on a 2009 survey in Zemgale

Fig. 3.3. Percentage distribution of possibilities for pensioners in Zemgale region to make savings, (n=461)



Source: author's construction based on a literature review

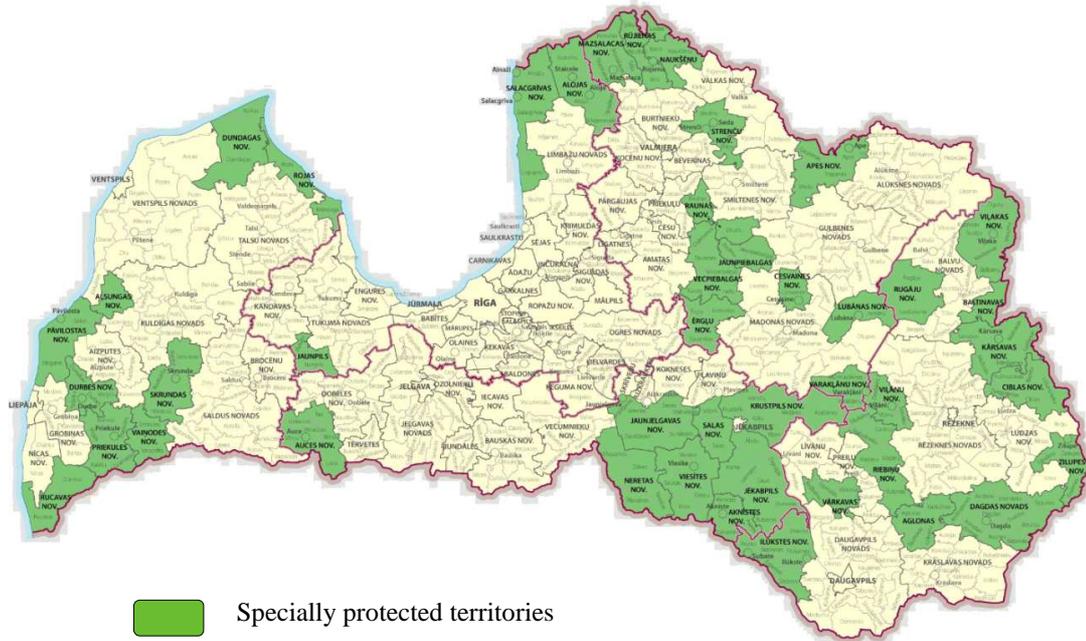
Fig. 3.4. Approaches to researching life quality in selected sciences



Source: author's construction based on the Handbook for Practical Work, 2010

Fig. 3.5. Legal act system of the European Union

!!! In schemes, arrows shall be used to describe only a process, while structural schemes shall use lines. All “boxes” shall be connected/associated with other ones, and the figure shall be understandable even if it is “taken out” of the text.



Source: State Regional Development Agency, 2012

Fig. 3.6. Specially protected territories in Latvia in 2011-2012

Technical production of figures: it is advised to scan photographs and create graphs by means of MS Excel and other computer programs.

3.5. Formatting formulas

Formulas shall be numbered with Arabic numerals within the chapter.

The number of a formula shall be aligned right and placed in parentheses at the level of the lowest text line. The formula shall end with a comma. The size of letters, numerals and symbols shall be of 12 pt. The formula shall be centred. Formulas shall be created using Microsoft Equation 3.0 (*Insert/ Object/ Microsoft Equation 3.0*).

Formulas being derived or created by the author shall be cited, e.g. “... The formula (3.1) created by the author”.

If referring to a formula in the text, its number shall be indicated, e.g. “... calculated according to the formula (3.1).”

Formulas taken from the literature and other sources shall be referred to. e.g. “By employing statistical methods for expert evaluation, each factor’s average rating by the experts was calculated by Formula 3.1.”

Example of formatting formulas

$$\bar{v}_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k v_{ij}}{k}, \quad (3.1)$$

where $\sum_{i=1}^k v_{ij}$ – sum of expert ratings;

v_{ij} – j -th factor’s rating by the i -th expert (on a scale of 100 points);

k – number of experts. (Vasermanis et al., 2002)

3.6. Citing references within the text

A citation allows identifying the source of an idea or quotation, as well as the page where to find the idea or the quotation in the source.

Any quotation, figure, formula, data, fact as well as findings and ideas of other authors shall be cited in any research study. Quotations shall be placed in quotation marks. A paraphrase of works by other authors shall not put in quotation marks; yet, it has to be unbiased.

Copying some text from a book as well as paraphrasing ideas expressed by other authors without making a citation of the source is not allowed. **Upon establishing such a violation, the author of the submitted master's thesis shall be prohibited from presenting it for defence.**

Citations are used together with the list of references, applying **the first element and date method** – a quotation is followed by *the author or title of the document cited and the publication year*, which are put in parentheses.

!!! If no publication year is indicated, [s.a.], a Latin abbreviation for “no date” shall be used.

If placing a citation at the end of the sentence, a full stop is put **after the parentheses**.

Citations may be formatted in italic; yet, all the citations in the master's thesis shall be formatted **in the same style**.

Examples

Text (Eko, 2006).

Text (*Personality Development in Family...*, 1999).

List of references

1. Eko U. (2006) How to Write a Diploma paper. Riga: Janis Roze Publishers. 314 p.

.....

5. *Personality Development in Family, at School and University* (1999): proceedings. University of Latvia: Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology; ed. S.Kramena. Riga: University Publisher NT. 90 p.

If using *several works of the same author that have been published in the same year*, and the first element and the publication year for two or more documents coincide, a small Latin letter (a, b, c etc.) shall be indicated after the publication year, which is also added to the reference in the list of references.

Examples

Text (Repse, 2000a).

Text (Repse, 2000b).

List of references

1. Repse G. (2000a) *Thumbelina*. Riga: Petergailis. 182 p.

2. Repse G. (2000a) *Close-up: Dzemmas Skulme*. Riga: Jumava. 130 p.

If a book has *two authors*, a citation shall indicate both authors and the publication year.

Example

Text (Petrova, Jermolajeva, 2007).

List of references

Petrova I., Jermolajeva E. (2007) *Experience of European Countries in Territorial Marketing and Opportunities for its Application in Latvia*. Daugavpils: Daugavpils University Academic Publisher Saule. 160 p.

If a book has **three or more authors**, a citation shall indicate the first author (the first element), just as it is written on the title page, and add “et al.” and the publication year.

!!! If a bibliographical source is in English, an abbreviation **et al.** shall be used, in German – **u.a.**, in Russian – **и.др.**, in Latvian – **u.c.**

Example

Text (Ancane et al., 1998).

List of references

Ancane S., Bondars A., Klava J. (1998) *Problems of Rural Entrepreneurs in Talsi District*. Riga: Latvian State Institute of Agrarian Economics. 129 p.

!!! If a quotation is used in the master’s thesis, the quotation is separated from the rest of the text by quotation marks or the quotation is formatted in italic and the page number is indicated after the publication year.

Example

As mentioned by H. Gudijons (1998, 256), *studies are a too capacious process to be comprehensively explained by means of only one didactic model*.

As mentioned by H. Gudijons (1998, 256), “studies are a too capacious process to be comprehensively explained by means of only one didactic model”.

The skill of evaluative thinking is the ability to objectively analyse information and acquire personal experience. The skill to critically think can strengthen the mental (psychical) health (Rubana, 2002, 18).

!!! If a bibliographical source **is in Latvian**, the Latvian diacritical marks shall be replaced with respective Latin letters.

Example

A. Derkacs (Деркач) (2002, 308-309) gave the following definition of professionalism: *it is an integral psychological characteristic of human performance that reflects the level and nature of management of the individual’s profession and means that the individual performs the professional duties at high quality*.

V. Janks (Jank) un H. Meijers (Meyer) (2002, 98) pointed out that *since the 1920s, a lot of didactic theories and models have been developed in Germany*.

If citing **laws and other legal documents** in the text, the **first element and date method** shall be applied, i.e. the citation shall include the first **three** words and the publication year. If the first two titles and the publication year for several documents coincide, a small Latin letter (a, b, c etc.) shall be indicated after the publication year, which is also added to the reference in the list of references.

Example

Text (Protection Zone Law, 1997).

Text (Environmental Protection Law, 2006).

Text (Regulations regarding Water..., 2001).

Text (Regulation of the Council (EC) No. 1083/2006, 2006).

List of references

1. Protection Zone Law (1997): Law of the Republic of Latvia. Latvijas Vestnesis, No. 56/57, 25 February, pp. 1-3.
2. Environmental Protection Law (2006): Law of the Republic of Latvia [online] [accessed on 25 May 2011]. Retrieved: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=147917&from=off>.
3. *Regulations regarding the Protection of Water and Soil from Agricultural Pollution with Nitrates* (2001): Cabinet Regulation No. 531 of 18 December 2001 [online] [accessed on 25 May 2009]. Retrieved: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=56960>.
4. *Regulation of the Council (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999* [online] [accessed on 28 November 2011]. Retrieved: http://www.esfondi.lv/upload/05-saistosie_dokumenti/es_regulas/2006-07-11_regula_1083_2006_LV.pdf.

In-text citations of *electronic sources*. If a source to be cited is not available in printed format but only in electronic format, it may be cited just like a printed material.

Example

Text (Parsova, 2009).

List of references

Parsova V. (2009) *Real Estate Formation* [electronic resource]: textbook. Jelgava: LLU. 288 p. CD.

In-text citations of *internet resources*.**Example**

Text (Libkovska, 2007).

Text (Cadastral Evaluation, [s.a.]).

List of references

1. Libkovska U. (2007) *Trends in Professional Education under Modern Economic Conditions* [online] [accessed 8 February 2012]. Retrieved: www.dukonference.lv/raksti_pdf/Libkovska+.pdf.
2. *Cadastral Evaluation* [online]: SLS [accessed 12 February 2012]. Retrieved: <http://www.vzd.gov.lv/darbibas-jomas/kadastrala-vertesana>.

!!! If the author of the master's thesis has conducted an original research, e.g. a survey, a SWAT analysis of an organisation etc., the summarised results are presented in tables or figures and the source of information shall be specified as follows: *author's survey, author's construction, author's calculations* etc.

3.7. Making a list of references

References in a list shall be arranged alphabetically – the list shall be started with Latin references, followed by Cyrillic ones (Russian) – by author surname or by title of

work. Several works of the same author shall be alphabetically arranged by title. Materials retrieved from the Internet are included and arranged in the list just like research papers and articles.

Monographs

The sequence of bibliographical components in a reference shall be as follows: author surname, initials (year) *Title of the Monograph*: other details. Place of publication: publisher. Total number of pages.

!!! Other bibliographical details may be as follows: proceedings, international conference materials, teaching aid, textbook etc.

If referencing a **whole book**, a **full stop** shall be put before the number of pages.

The title of the main work shall be **formatted** in italic.

Example

Single author book

Zvejnieks A. (1998) *Taxes and Fees*: textbook. Riga Technical University. Faculty of Engineering Economics. 2nd rev. ed. Riga: RTU. 412 p.

2-3 author book

Ancane S., Bondars A., Klava J. (1998) *Problems of Rural Entrepreneurs in Talsi District*. Riga: Latvian State Institute of Agrarian Economics. 129 p.

Book or proceedings compiled by an editor

Land Use and the Land Cadastre in Latvia (2001). Edited by A. Boruks. Riga: LLU, Skriveri Science Centre, LV SLS. 408 p.

Section of a publication (**a chapter of a book or a monograph, a paper from a collection of conference materials or from proceedings**)

The sequence of bibliographical components in a reference shall be as follows: author surname, initials (year) Title (of the section): other details. **In:** Chief contributor (author). *Title (of the main publication)*: other details. Place of publication: publisher, page numbers.

!!! If **a section of a book** is referenced, a **comma** is put before the page numbers.

A monographic section shall be separated from the main publication (a monograph, a collection of conference materials) by the preposition “**In**” or its translations in other languages (**В KH:**).

The title of the main publication shall be **formatted** in italic.

Example

1. Mole J. (2003) Collision of Cultures. **In:** Mole J. *Business Culture and Etiquette in European Countries*. Riga: Janis Roze Publishers, pp. 46-48.
2. Parsova V. (2001) Implementation of the State Cadastre in Latvia. **In:** *Land Use and the Land Cadastre in Latvia*. Ed. by A. Boruks. Riga: LLU Skriveri Science Centre, LV State Land Service, pp. 313-365.
3. Asejeva A., Kopiks N., Viesturs D. (2008) Application of Economic-Mathematical Simulation for the Choice of the Technical Support of Technologies of Agricultural Crops. **In:** *Economic Science for Rural Development*: proceedings of the international scientific conference, No. 16. Jelgava: LLU, pp. 14-19.
4. Feather J. (1998) Introduction. **In:** *The Information Society: a study continuity and change*. London, p. 11.

Section of a serial publication (proceedings, a journal, a magazine and a newspaper). An article from a periodical.

The sequence of bibliographical components in a reference shall be as follows: author surname, initials (year) Title (of the section): other details. *Title (of the main publication):* other details, issue number, date, page number(s).

!!! No preposition "In" or its translations in other languages (B KH:) **shall be used** to separate the section of a serial publication from the main publication in a reference.

Example

Article in a magazine or a newspaper

1. Riekstina A. (1998) A cowshed is ready in a few days: about the application of fibrolite plates. *Latvijas Lopkopis un Piensaimnieks*, No. 8, pp. 34-36.
2. Dzintars R. (2009) Idle time opportunities. *Latvijas Avize*, No. 260, 7 October, p. 16.

Electronic sources

The sequence of bibliographical components in a reference shall be as follows: *Title* [online]: other details. Publication. Place of publication: publisher, date. Total number of pages. Access data [source access date]. Retrieved.

!!! Publication. Place of publication: publisher, date. Total number of pages. – this information shall be specified if available.

[...] – brackets shall be used if the author wants to add his/her comment to the reference, to add something that had not been taken from the source itself. For example, [s.a.] means that no year of publication is specified for the source. [online] indicates that the material was viewed online on the Internet instead of in printed format.

Example

1. Berzina M. (2008) *Land Reform* [online]. *Latvijas Vestnesis*, No. 38, 26 September. [accessed 5 October 2009]. Retrieved: <http://www.vestnesis.lv/pzni/index.php?menu=doc&id=181515>.
2. *Library in the „castle of light” or on the Internet?* [s.a.] [online] [accessed 22 January 2012]. Retrieved: <http://www.dtnet.lv/raksti/LV/DP/200101/01011501.stm>.
3. Pumain D. (2004) *Central Places Theory* [online] [accessed 11 May 2011]. Retrieved: http://www.hypergeo.eu/article.php?id_article=188.

Laws

The sequence of bibliographical components in a reference shall be as follows: title of the law (year): law of (name of the state). Name of the source, place of publication, details of the source, publication date, page number(s).

Example

1. Law on Specially Protected Nature Territories (1993): law of LV. *Zinotajs*, No. 12, 1 April, pp. 801-811.
2. Protection Zone Law (1997): law of LV. *Latvijas Vestnesis*, No. 56/57, 25 February, pp. 1-3.
3. Consumer Rights Protection Law (1997): law of LV. **In:** *Legal Documents of LV: Trade*. Riga: Applied Information Service, PT-1-3-PT-1-3-21.
4. *Environmental Protection Law* (2006): law of LV [online] [accessed 10 January 2012]. Retrieved: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=147917&from=off>.

Other legal documents

The sequence of bibliographical components in a reference shall be as follows:
title of the legal document (year): kind of the legal document and the date of adoption.
Name of the source, place of publication, details of the source, date, page number(s).

Example

1. *Regulations regarding the Protection of Water and Soil from Nitrogen Pollution Produced by Agricultural Activity* (2001): Cabinet Regulation No. 531 of 18 December 2001 [online] [accessed 25 May 2011]. Retrieved: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=56960>
2. Guidelines „Healthy Nutrition (2003-2013)” (2003): Cabinet Decree No. 556. *Latvijas Vestnesis*, 5 September, pp. 8-10.

4. PRE-DEFENCE, SUBMISSION AND DEFENCE OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

4.1. Presentation of the master's thesis for pre-defence

The pre-defence of the master's thesis shall take place at a meeting of the ISSH **not later than three weeks before** its defence at a meeting of the Master Examination Commission (MEC).

Any commission for the pre-defence of master's thesis is approved by the director of the ISSH. The Commission shall consist of at least three members of teaching staff, of which one shall be the supervisor of the master's student.

A **printed draft version** of the master's thesis shall be submitted to the secretary of the SOHU Institute according to the schedule set by the ISSH **not later than a week before** the date set for a pre-defence meeting of the MEC.

!!! The main part of the master's thesis shall be completely elaborated and printed for the pre-defence meeting.

The student shall prepare a presentation (up to 15 minutes long) for the pre-defence of the master's thesis, in which he/she justifies the urgency of the topic and existing problems, defines the research aim and tasks and specifies the research object and subject as well as the research questions and/or hypothesis. In the pre-defence report, the student mainly presents the research findings and identified problems, stressing the most important conclusions and solutions proposed.

If the pre-defence has been successful, the student shall improve and enhance the master's thesis, taking into account the proposals and directions made at the pre-defence meeting, and submits it to the ISSH within a term set by the Faculty. In case the pre-defence has been unsuccessful, the Commission shall make a decision on the improvement of the master's thesis and a repeated pre-defence according to a schedule set by the director of the ISSH. If the student fails in the repeated pre-defence again, the master's thesis shall not be submitted for defence at a MEC meeting.

4.2. Submission of the master's thesis

The master's thesis shall be bound in a **hard cover** of a certain kind.

The author **glues an envelope** inside the front cover (A5 format), into which the MEC secretary (after the master's thesis has been reviewed) puts the reviews of the master's thesis.

The **procedure of submitting the master's thesis** is as follows:

- the master's thesis being successfully pre-defended, completely formatted and bound in a hard cover shall be approved by a signature of the supervisor and of the ISSH director;
- the applicant for a master's degree shall submit the following to the Faculty's Dean's Office at least 15 days before the MEC meeting:
 - two copies of the master's thesis;
 - CV;
 - copy of the passport;
 - conformation of meeting the obligations (<http://www.llu.lv/?ri=4441>).

!!! Before submitting the master's thesis to the Institute, the student uploads his/her master's thesis in the LLU IS using his/her user account and password, complying with the following requirements:

- *all the parts of the master's thesis (or the final work of studies (FWS)) shall be*

- available in a single computer file;*
- *file format: **PDF, up to 50 Mb in size;***
- *files to be converted into PDF files shall not have watermarks and advertising texts;*
- *file shall not represent a scanned text figure;*
- *file shall not be password-protected (locked);*
- *additionally, a **short** annotation of the FWS in Latvian and in English shall be copied into or typed in the entry fields in the LLU IS (**maximum 850 characters in size**). The annotation shall include: the author's name and the title of the master's thesis; the research aim; the most important research results and findings;*
- *Latin alphabet letters shall be used in the name of the file, no diacritical marks are allowed;*
- *name of the file shall consist of the student's surname, name and the matriculation number, e.g. **Liepina_Ilze_EF12345.pdf**.*

The master's thesis shall not be submitted for defence at a MEC meeting if:

- its length is inadequate;
- research approach chosen has been wrong;
- it has not been formatted in accordance with the ESAF methodological Guidelines;
- signature of the supervisor and/or the director of the Institute is lacked.

4.3. Status, duty and responsibility of the reviewer for the master's thesis

A **reviewer** shall be an official competent person that participates in an expert evaluation of a particular master's thesis. The reviewers of master's thesis shall be appointed by the ISSH director in cooperation with the study programme's director and approved by a decree of the dean. A master's thesis shall be reviewed by two reviewers.

The *duty of a reviewer* shall be to examine the content of the master's thesis and perform an unbiased evaluation on whether:

- the thesis complies with the ESAF methodological Guidelines for writing and formatting master's thesis;
- applicant for the master's degree is able to analyse, critically review and use works by other authors (including those in foreign languages);
- applicant has the ability to define conclusions and proposals based on his/her research done;
- applicant's practical recommendations (proposals) are logical and real.

The key values and main deficiencies of the master's thesis shall be identified by reviewer.

Reviewers shall submit a written review (preferably computer typeset) with a conclusion on whether the master's thesis fulfils the requirements for the degree to be awarded and give an overall mark for it, as well as make their remarks and raise questions. A review form is available (Annex 6) on the ESAF website (section "Methodological materials" – Final Work of Studies <http://www.esaf.llu.lv/metodiskie-materiali> - SND recenzijas veidlapa). The author of the master's thesis shall have the right to get familiarised with the review **not later than three working days before** the defence of his/her master's thesis.

If during the defence of the master's thesis it is revealed that a reviewer had evaluated a master's thesis negligently and carelessly, he/she shall be excluded from the list of reviewers based on a MEC decision, making a record in the MEC protocol.

4.4. Presentation of the master's thesis for defence

The **defence of the master's thesis** takes place at an **open meeting** of the Master Examination Commission (MEC), and its purpose is to evaluate the academic knowledge, professional preparedness and creative skills, acquired and developed during the period of studies, of the student who has completed the study programme and to make a decision on awarding a degree corresponding to the study direction.

A MEC consisting of seven persons shall be formed from among leading scientists of the related speciality/branch of science, members of the teaching staff of LLU and other universities of the Republic of Latvia and employees of research institutes. It is advised to include in a MEC at least one expert approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the related branch of science and a representative of professional organisations or employers whose main job is not at LLU.

Proposals for the composition of a MEC shall be **prepared by the study programme director** and submitted for consideration to a meeting of the Faculty's Council.

The composition of a MEC shall be **approved for one academic year** by the rector's decree, which is prepared by the Centre of Studies of LLU based on a transcript of the meeting of the Faculty's Council.

The defence of the master's thesis shall begin with the author's report (up to 15 minutes long), in which the student specifies the topicality of the research topic, a problem researched, the research aim and tasks for achieving the aim, gives a theoretical justification, states a hypothesis put forward and/or raises research questions and familiarises the MEC with research methods employed, research results, main conclusions as well as proposals, if any. The presentation shall have illustrative research results (figures, tables and the most important quotations of interviews).

The **presentation shall be followed by a discussion** (questions asked by the MEC). The report by the author of the master's thesis shall be followed by questions asked by the MEC and present persons, on which the author has to give short, accurate and comprehensive answers. If the reviewers of the master's thesis do not participate at the MEC meeting, a member of the MEC familiarises the meeting participants with their written reviews. The author shall give prudent answers to the questions raised by the reviewers as well.

The course of defending the master's thesis exposes the level of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the student during the process of studies. A good presentation, the full knowledge of the content of the master's thesis, convincing answers to the questions of the MEC members and reviewers and a prudent demonstration of visual aids serve as evidence that the student had elaborated his/her master's thesis independently.

In the academic master study programme, the **master's thesis shall be evaluated on a 10-point scale**. The lowest pass mark shall be 4 (almost average). When deciding on the final mark for the master's thesis, the MEC shall take into consideration the mark given by the reviewers, which are reported in writing to the MEC secretary.

The following **criteria** are taken into account in evaluating the master's thesis:

1) quality of the master's thesis:

- topicality of the research topic, the skill to accurately define the research problem;
- mutual coherence among the key elements of the programmatic part of the master's thesis and the quality of formulations;
- structure of the master's thesis and the theoretical framework for it;
- application of particular sociological theories in the master's thesis;

- appropriateness of the research methodology and the description of it, the choice of research methods;
- quality of the practical (empirical) research;
- degree of having the tasks performed and the aim achieved;
- key values of the master's thesis (innovative research approaches, significance, practical usefulness); novelties in the master's thesis;
- quality of conclusions and proposals;
- accuracy of citations and the compliance of the master's thesis with the formatting requirements set in the Guidelines;
- efforts made in the elaboration of the master's thesis (the number and approachability of respondents/informants, the level of analysis).

2) **presentation of the master's thesis:**

- content and form of the presentation report;
- skill to publicly discuss and prudently defend one's own opinion;
- participation in scientific conferences held earlier in relation with the master's thesis; research papers published.

The decision on the mark for the master's thesis as well as on awarding a degree shall be made at a closed MEC meeting by a simple majority of votes in an open vote. In case the numbers of votes for and against are equal, the vote of the MEC chairperson (deputy chairperson) shall be decisive.

The mark of the master's thesis shall be recorded in a MEC protocol book and in a checklist. If the mark for the defence of the master's thesis is "fail", the MEC shall decide whether the student has the right to repeatedly defend the same master's thesis that has been revised or another topic shall be chosen and a new master's thesis shall be produced. The master student shall repeatedly submit a revised master's thesis not earlier than six months after the decision was made. The right to submit it shall be retained for three years.

In case the mark of the master's thesis is lower than four on a 10-point scale, the student shall be expelled for not executing the plan of studies. Upon applying for a repeated defence of the master's thesis, the student shall pay a fee set by LLU for the number of credit points for the last semester in the plan of studies.

Upon identifying plagiarism in the master's thesis, the MEC shall make a decision on the student's suspension from the final examinations and shall propose expelling the student for unfair activities. A repeated defence of the master's thesis shall be allowed not earlier than after one year, and another topic shall be chosen for the master's thesis.

ANNEXES

**LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

Modra Saulite

(Name, Surname)

**E-SERVICES IN A MUNICIPALITY: THE CASE OF
ZEMGALE PLANNING REGION**

(Title)

**Master's thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the academic degree of social
sciences in sociology**

Author

(signature)

Modra Saulite, matr. No.

(name, surname, matr. No.)

Supervisor

(signature)

assist.prof. *Dr.sc.soc.* **Ieva Barga**

(position, scien. degree, name, surname)

Institute director

(signature)

assoc.prof. *Dr.hist.* **Andris Puce**

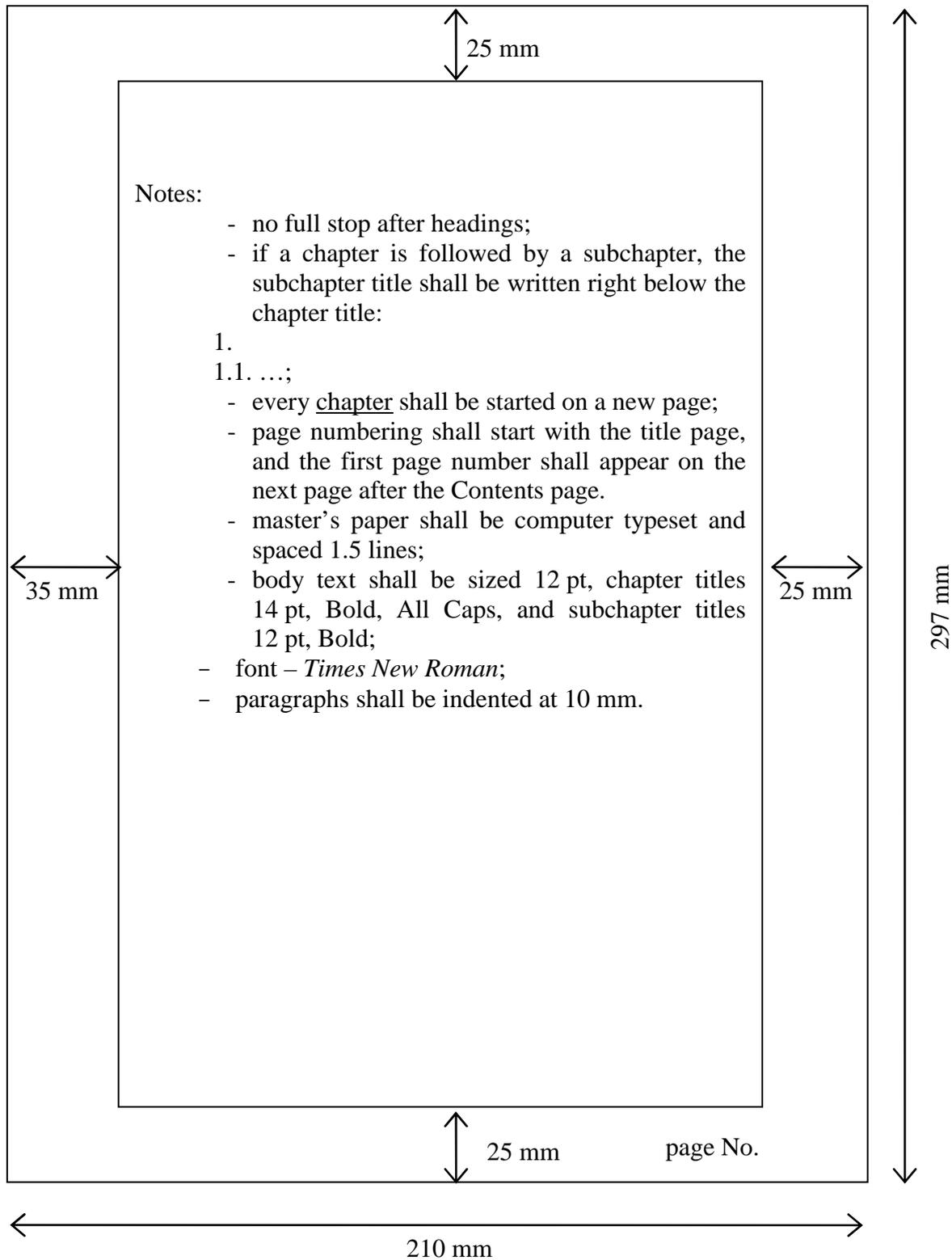
(position, scien. degree, name, surname)

Jelgava 20__

(year)

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GUARANTEE

In Jelgava

(date)

I, _____ (*name, surname*), hereby guarantee that the master's thesis has been produced independently. Data and definitions from other sources were referenced in the master's thesis.

The master's thesis has not been published and will be submitted for the first time to the Master Examination Commission for defence.

The electronic version of the master's thesis available in the LLU IS matches the original.

Personal signature

MASTER EXAMINATION COMMISSION DECISION

THE MASTER'S THESIS WAS DEFENDED AT A MASTER EXAMINATION
COMMISSION MEETING ON

WITH A MARK _____

PROTOCOL NO. _____

MEC SECRETARY _____

MASTER'S THESIS REVIEW

1. Author:

(name, surname)

2. Title:

3. Total length _____ pages, number of tables _____, number of figures _____, number of annexes _____, number of bibliographical sources _____, including in foreign languages _____.

4. Evaluation of the topicality of the research topic, hypothesis/research questions, research object, research subject, research aim and tasks

.....
.....
.....

5. Evaluation of the methodology and structure of the master's thesis

Structure	Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/>
Methodology	Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

.....
.....

6. Evaluation of the execution of the tasks and the achievement of the aim

Research aim	Achieved <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly achieved <input type="checkbox"/>	Not achieved <input type="checkbox"/>
Research tasks	Executed <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly executed <input type="checkbox"/>	Not executed <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments.....

.....
.....

7. Skill of the author to use the theoretical literature, legal documents and other information sources (including in foreign languages)

Skill to use bibliographical sources	Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly sufficient <input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient <input type="checkbox"/>
Bibliographical sources in foreign languages used	Sufficient quantity and quality <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly sufficient quantity and quality <input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient quantity and quality <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments.....

.....

8. Evaluation of the research/empirical part

Research/empirical part	Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/>
Association of the research/empirical part with theory	Association is complete <input type="checkbox"/>	Association is incomplete <input type="checkbox"/>	No association <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments.....

9. Do the conclusions and proposals correspond to the research aim and content of the master's thesis

Conclusions	Correspond to the aim and content <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly correspond to the aim and content <input type="checkbox"/>	Do not correspond to the aim and content <input type="checkbox"/>
Proposals	Meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Do not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments.....

10. Key values of the master's thesis

.....

11. Deficiencies and imperfections of the master's thesis

.....

12. Questions to the author

.....

13. Overall evaluation of the master's thesis

The master's thesis _____ the requirements set and the author _____
(meets / does not meet) (may / may not)
 be awarded a **Master degree of social sciences in sociology**.

Master's thesis reviewer:
(scientific or academic degree, name, surname, organisation, position)

_____201_____

_____ (signature)

Reviewer's evaluation of the master's thesis

Author:
(name, surname)

Title:
.....
.....

Mark (on a 10 point scale):
(numeral and in words, e.g. 8 (very good))

Reviewer:
(scientific or academic degree, name, surname)

.....
(organisation, position)

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